

Remarks

This amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed on September 22, 2004. Claims 1-3, 5, and 12 are being amended. In view of the following remarks and above amendments, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-19.

In the Office Action, claims 1-3, 6, 12, and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Henson et al.(U.S. Pat. No. 6,044,956). Henson et al. discloses first and second strands of parallel conveyor chains with a roller support frame extending between the strands. Each end of the roller support frame is supported by pins extending from the strands into apertures formed in the roller support frame ends. Each strand is formed from a plurality of link assemblies, pivotally connected by the pins. As a result, the pins must be significantly longer than the width of the link assemblies and are subjected to multiple shear forces (i.e. shear forces from the support frames and shear forces from the link assemblies). Therefore, the pins must be sized appropriately to withstand the shear forces and extend into the roller support frame ends.

The present invention includes one or more link assemblies having an integral flight that supports an end of the roller support frame. As a result, the pins connecting adjacent link assemblies are not also subjected to shear forces from the roller support frames and need not extend beyond the link assemblies. Therefore, the pins of the present invention can be shorter and have a smaller diameter compared to the pins in Henson et al. formed from the same material.

Claims 1-3 and 12 are being amended to include the feature of at least one of the link assemblies including an integral flight supporting an end of the roller support frame. Henson et al. does not disclose a link assembly including an integral flight that supports an end of a roller support frame. Claims 2, 3, 6, and 14 depend from one of claims 1 and 12 which as discussed above, Applicant believes is allowable over the cited references. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-3, 6, 12, and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 1-4, 6, 11-14, and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Henson et al. in view of Yoshimura et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,265,715). As discussed above, Henson et al. does not disclose, or suggest, a flight formed

as an integral part of a link assembly that supports an end of a roller support frame .

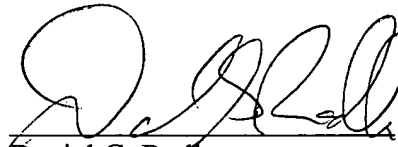
Yoshimura et al. does not satisfy this deficiency. Claims 2-4, 6, 11, 13, 14, and 19 depend from one of claims 1 and 12 which Applicant believes is allowable. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-4, 6, 11-14, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 1-6, 11-14, and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Henson et al. in view of Yoshimura et al. as applied to claims 1-4, 6, 11-14, and 19 above, and further in view of Rauenbuehler (U.S. Pat. No. 3,053,376). As discussed above, Henson et al. and Yoshimura et al. do not disclose or suggest a flight formed as an integral part of a link assembly that support an end of a roller support frame. Although Rauenbuehler does disclose a flange supporting a bracket supporting a shaft of a roller. Nothing in Rauenbuehler suggests supporting an end of a roller support frame with the bracket or flange. Accordingly, Rauenbuehler does not satisfy this deficiency. Moreover, none of the cited references disclose a link assembly having opposing integral flights, such as claimed in claim 5. Claims 2-6, 11, 13, 14, and 19 depend from one of claims 1 and 12 which Applicant believes is allowable. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-6, 11-14, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 1-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Henson et al. in view of Yoshimura et al. and Rauenbuehler as applied to claims 1-6, 11-14, and 19 above, and further in view of Costanzo (U.S. Pat. No. 6,494,312). As discussed above, Henson et al., Yoshimura et al., and Rauenbuehler do not disclose or suggest a flight formed as an integral part of a link assembly that support an end of a roller support frame. Costanzo does not satisfy this deficiency. Claims 2-11 and 13-19 depend from one of claims 1 and 12 which Applicant believes is allowable. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

In view of the above remarks and amendments to claims 1-3, 5, and 12, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-19. No additional fees for filing this response are believed to be due. However, if such fees are due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge them to deposit account no. 17-0055.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. G. Radler', written over a horizontal line.

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